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ABSTRACT

Ethnocentrism has permeated the European-American educational establishment for nearly 500 years. Native students have been subjected to a barrage of assimilation tactics designed to destroy their cultures and languages. Only 206 Native languages remain (about a third of the original number), and about 50 of these are near extinction. Language destruction promotes cultural disintegration. Among the factors contributing to the poor academic achievement of Native students are cultural differences between home and school, ignorance of Native culture among school staff, differences in language and values between teachers and students, culturally based Native learning styles, and culturally biased testing. Community participation and community control of education are critical to developing culturally relevant curricula and making education responsive to Native students' needs. Communities and educators can draw on the experiences of other tribes that have developed successful programs incorporating the local linguistic and cultural context. Other strategies include: community involvement in curriculum revision and instructional materials selection; tribal education codes and board of education policies that are consistent with state and federal goals; textbook review; teacher education programs that prepare teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations; integrating Native history into the core curriculum; encouraging participation of elders and intergenerational learning experiences; and empowering students to become environmental stewards. This paper contains 56 references. (SV)

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TEACHING THROUGH TRADITIONS: INCORPORATING NATIVE LANGUAGES AND CULTURES INTO CURRICULA

Linda Skinner

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Teaching Through Traditions: Incorporating Native Languages and Cultures into Curricula

Linda Skinner

There is a book called *The Education of Little Tree* which is a heartfelt description of one young Cherokee child's growing up days...filled with warmth of grandparents and love of this natural world; surrounded by his Native language and the ways of his people; blessed to learn through life's experiences with family at his side. In this book, he remembers:

> Gramma said, When you come on something good, first thing to do is share it with whoever you can find; that way, the good spreads out where no telling it will go, which is right.

This paper will encourage all people to look squarely at the situation of Native children. Historical perspective is offered for information to enable citizens today to see the bigger picture, and formulate solutions which will improve education for *all* children. Theodore Roosevelt said, "This country will not be a good place for *any* of us to live until it is a good place for *all* of us to live."

Overview

Although the United States government provides programs specifically directed to Native educational needs, the overall effects have fallen drastically short of meaningful change. Native students have been subject to a barrage of "educational remedies" over the last 500 or so years. These "remedies" have ranged from assimilation tactics of cultural and linguistic genocide (ethnocide) to the compensatory "band-aid" programs which, all too often, treat the symptom rather than cure the problem, and which relegate our children to a dependent, inferior role in society. Our students *should* enjoy an equal level of educational success and the same opportunities that the children of the immigrants enjoy. In 1991, Native children, descendants of the original inhabitants of this continent, still suffer — and some tragically! The numerous problems include low achievement scores, high drop out rates and high absenteeism. It is a commonly held belief that the "inability" of American Indian and Alaska Native children to fully benefit from and excel in their school experiences, was/is in large part, due to their culture. In essence, this is blaming the victim, which serves to compound the problem. It is time we looked at the whole picture to see the reoccurring patterns — and change our direction to one of equity and respect for all students. Vine Deloria, Jr. observed that it is time for a redefinition of education for Natives:

> If we now ... redefine Indian education as an internal Indian institution, an educational process which moves within the Indian context and does not try to avoid or escape this context, then our education will substantially improve. (Deloria, 1990)

This paper will briefly discuss how past policies have created the dilemma we face today, our cultures are threatened, our children are confused and hurt, and our Native languages are lost and/or endangered. Education will be viewed from the existing English-American context and compared with Native education philosophies. The acquisition of language, exemplary programs and successful practices will be presented. Present-day education barriers and the problems they present for students will be defined and addressed with solutions from the testimony, literature, and many years of collective experience of those who testified at the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force hearings. This paper will also analyze present conditions of Native education, language, and culture to show a wide range of quality and a diversity of approaches. Strategies and solutions will be offered.

One Teacher's Experience: A True Story

Our Elders have kept our cultural tradition of transmitting knowledge, values, and history through oral tradition. We learn from the experience of others. There is always something beyond the story itself which takes hold of each listener's heart and remains in memory. As our elders have modeled their love for this method of learning and teaching, I want to give the following account of a transforming, unforgettable lesson in language and culture which forever changed my life. This riveting experience is one I have verbally shared with hundreds of educators to impress the

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importance of an understanding of Native languages, Native cultures, and Native children.

It was my first teaching job. I was "fresh out of school," having studied at a major university in Oklahoma, preparing for what I wanted most to do in life: teach Indian children. It had been difficult to find any classes to help me do that, even in the state which was once "Indian Territory" and still has more "CDIB Indians" than any other. The classes had very little content about the culturally different child, let alone about Indian children specifically. But I had done my best. I took Sociology classes, read a lot and traveled extensively (from Greenland to Europe to Mexico). Formal teacher education study in 1966-1971 included one paper on cultural diversity in one history of education textbook. That was not enough.

I was interviewed by a Zia Pueblo Day School community committee and one Bureau of Indian Affairs official for a teaching position at Zia Pueblo Day School. One of their many questions of me was, "How will you communicate with our children? They speak the Keresan language and you speak English. Of the ten kindergarten children, most speak only Keresan." I thought a moment, and answered, "I would like to learn your language, but I would also, in the beginning, communicate with the students in ways *other* than language." Little did I know how difficult it would be, even with the best of intentions. I quickly learned that the barriers of language and culture are big ones. Thankfully, I soon learned that **it is possible for barriers to lead to the building of bridges**. I was also educated in a very kind way, that the people had their own extremely valid reasons for keeping the language to themselves.

The first week of school I tried creative approaches. I depended almost completely on the Keres-speaker aide for communicating concepts. One game we played was for the multiple purpose of getting comfortable with one another, having fun together, and learning both the Keresan and English names of animals. The idea was that a student would imitate the sounds or movements of an animal, and the others would guess. It was great fun. Things were going very well, until the teacher-aide had to leave the room. We still played. The kids had already imitated many of the animals around the pueblo: dogs, horses, sheep, pigs...It was Cindy Lupe's turn. She went "Meeoww." Immediately Alfonso jumped up and said "Moose!" I quickly thought back to my teacher ed days. I had learned about the "the teachable moment," and ***here it was***! I would teach Alfonso what a moose was. I proceeded to do just that. I put my arms way up over my head and spread my fingers wide for the antlers. I bellowed loud noises and said, "**Moooose**." The big eyes and puzzled expressions told me something was awry. During recess (which was announced rather soon after) I spoke with Mary, the teacher-aide, and told her about what had happened, adding that their faces told me something was not right. She looked at me with eyes that told me she had seen similar things happen all too often...and her head sort of dropped in her hands as she (still smiling) said, "Oh, Linda, in our language 'Moose' means cat." Oh, dear! We gathered the children together, and with constant bilingual translations via Mary, we sat and talked about the need to communicate...That we came from different places and spoke different languages. We said we would help each other. I told them about Oklahoma, my family and the Choctaws. They showed me a prickly pear cactus fruit and talked about hot chilies and pottery. I felt better. Serious as the predicament was, we all laughed, and were genuinely amused. We each learned that day. I realized later that our classroom circle conversation was the first of many meetings to follow on the topic of cultural relevance in the classroom.

On the way home that night, I thought (for 37 1/2 miles) about what had happened, and what I should do. I figured this sort of thing happened over and over again for the Zia people, and they deserved better for their children. I was Choctaw and committed to doing my best, and had specifically *chosen* to be there, and yet, had not succeeded that day. What had happened and what *was* happening to the children whose teachers did not even care about their "Indian-ness?" I thought about resigning so that a better teacher could take over, and realized that probably would not happen. I resolved to stay, and do the best job I could...and to *pay attention*. The kids were great. They had already said they would help me...and they did.

Now I was ready! I worked every evening that first week and all weekend to develop meaningful educational experiences. I listened intently to the children. They loved horses, birds, butterflies, and fishing. Rhonda talked about "wild piggies." They knew a lot about many things, like hunting, planting, dances and pottery. They spent lots of time with their families, and had close relationships with grandparents, aunties and uncles. I began developing my own instructional materials, even though the BIA had spent much money on commercially developed programs. But they were a lot like "Dick and Jane," meant for middle class non-Indian kids. They were not very successful or interesting to these curious, active Native minds.

The next Monday morning I finally felt ready, and much more secure. I set up a pretty little fishing pond with beautiful blue cardboard for water so the construction paper fish could "swim" in it. When you "fished" with the pole, the magnet on the end of the string "caught" the fish. There were many colors, because this was a bilingual color-learning game. I was proud. The kids would love it. Early that morning, Alfonso and Morris were the first students in the room. They ran over to see what was new in the corner. They kept pointing and talking to each other in Keres. I encouraged them to "fish" for colors, showing them how. They still seemed hesitant. They were pointing to the cardboard that was the "water" and saying, "not blue, brown." How many times had I crossed the bridge over the Rio Grande and seen the water — but not "seen" the water? It is brown, not blue.

I learned that day, and in the many to follow, that the students would be my best teachers. I vowed to involve the community people from that point on. The education of these students depended on it. So I began to learn, by experience and gentle Pueblo guidance, not only *how* to involve parents and community in meaningful ways, but also how very valuable and essential it would prove to be. I learned a lot that year. My young teachers lit the way for me to learn, and to begin to understand.

There was also a book called *Teacher* which helped me that year. The author, Sylvia Ashton-Warner gave valuable insights from her experiences in recognizing and meeting the need for cultural relevance with her Maori students in New Zealand. I believe every educator and parent should read this book.

Over the last twenty years, I have shared experiences with many friends in education all over North America. This culture-shock, language-gap experience is not unique. It happens over and over again to Native children and their teachers. We all know now, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the federal government's assimilation and indoctrination policy of these many years has not worked. Now it is time to join our collective learning experiences and take this great opportunity to create effective change that will reflect justice and respect for our children which will in turn create a stronger and more just future for all children.

Background Information: Let History Speak

Cultural and linguistic genocide (ethnocide) has been directed toward the Native people of this land for many years. As oppressive as many government policies have been throughout time, none has been more devastating to a people than what has happened in the name of education. In their book, *A History of Indian Education*, Jon Reyhner and Jeanne Eder have researched and reported in a clear, concise way what has happened throughout the history of Indian education. Looking at this historical perspective can serve to help us understand, not only what has been done, but what we must now do. The school, in the United States of America, has utilized every effort to completely transform Native students into the European "American" culture and assimilate, acculturate and indoctrinate them to speak the same, dress the same, wear their hair the same, even to think and believe the same.

The following notations from America's past show clearly the path which has brought us to this decisive moment in history. We face immediate danger of losing our *selves* — our very identities, via the loss of our languages and the loss of our cultures. An historic example from Carlisle Indian School demonstrates how the policy of assimilation sought to completely integrate American Indians into "American culture." During the period of 1867-1904, Captain Richard Henry Pratt advocated complete "submersion" in European American culture, separating students from their heritage, including Native language. English was mandatory. Violators were punished. Young men with long hair had to have it cut. Traditional Native clothing was unacceptable. Any evidence of attachment to Native culture was viewed as an act of defiance. Captain Pratt said in his memoirs, "I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under, holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked." (Pratt, 1964, p. 241) This violent image conveys the feelings of many during the late 1800s.

In 1879, the Board of Indian Commissioners reported:

> The progress of the pupils in industrial boarding schools is far greater than in day schools. The children being removed from the idle and corrupting habits of savage homes are more easily led to adopt the customs of civilized life and inspired with a desire to learn. (*Report*, 1880, p. 14)

This taking of children was indeed the cruelest blow to our people. Our children are valued above all else. Children are viewed as sacred, as blessings from the Creator to be honored, loved, and protected. Family (and extended family) relationships are treasured and necessary for the good of all. Jesuit Father le Jeune wrote in 1634,

> these Barbarians cannot bear to have their children punished, nor even scolded, not being able to refuse anything to a crying

> child. They carry this to such an extent that upon the slightest pretext they would take them away from us, before they were educated. (Layman, 1942, p. 21)

On December 14, 1886, the policy forbidding the use of any Indian language was announced (House Executive Document, p. 12-21). The document states "...No books in any Indian language must be used or instruction given in that language...the rule will be strictly enforced." A Supplemental Report on Indian Education of December 1, 1889 states "Education should seek the disintegration of the tribes. Only English should be allowed to be spoken and only English speaking teachers should be employed in schools." (House Executive Document, p. 93-97)

In the 1840s, the Choctaw and Cherokee had elaborate, successful schools which were educating students in both their Native language and English. Their systems of education were extremely successful, even more successful than their surrounding communities. The English literacy level of Oklahoma Cherokees was higher than the non-Native populations in either Texas or Arkansas. The Cherokee population was 90 percent literate in the Cherokee language. There were more than 200 schools and academies. Numerous graduates were sent to eastern colleges. **All this was accomplished with complete tribal autonomy.**

Then the United States government took over the schools and Native education began a rapid decline. Today, many Cherokee and Choctaw are alienated from the European American school system. The tragic results of years of federal control has taken its toll on the Cherokee people, as documented in 1969 by the U. S. Senate Hearing on Indian Education:

- The median number of school years completed by the adult Cherokee population is only 5.5;
- Forty percent of adult Cherokees are functionally illiterate;
- Cherokee dropout rates in public schools are as high as 75 percent;
- The level of Cherokee education is well below the average for the state of Oklahoma and below the average for rural and non-whites in the state. (Hearing, 1969)

Throughout centuries of conflict with the United States government, we still held on to our values and beliefs — against all odds. We endured. Treaties were made. Treaties were broken. Assimilation policies were created and enforced. Our Native children and families paid the price. The tactics were unspeakable, and would be found criminal in a court of law today, especially when compared to what we now know (and Natives have always known) about human development, family relationships, and the importance of positive self-image to a fulfilled life. Those boarding school students are parents and grandparents today. Some still suffer the effects of degradation and miseducation, which is carried through to their children and grandchildren. Some have called this negation of self "the boarding school mentality." Many believe this era of separation and degradation is in large part responsible for the high rates of alcoholism, suicide, lack of motivation, alienation, insecurity, ambiguity, and unhappiness today.

The House Committee on Appropriations reported in 1818:

> In the present state of our country one of two things seems to be necessary. Either that those sons of the forest should be moralized or exterminated... Put into the hands of their children the primer and the hoe, and they will naturally, in time, take hold of the plow...(Roessel, 1962, p. 4)

During these boarding school experiences, it is reported our children were demeaned, treated as though they were inferior, and as though their cultures, languages and belief systems were less than adequate, even "heathen," "pagan," and "barbaric." What is evident to this writer is how little time was spent by the officials, the "do-gooders," and many others, in actually listening with open ears or learning with open hearts about these children who came from a strong spiritual center of ancient tradition based on cooperation, love, giving, wisdom, interdependence and respect for each individual and all that exists.

In 1870, the Annual Report of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs stated "education of their children" was seen as the quickest way to civilize Indians and that education could only be given "to children removed from the examples of their parents and the influence of the camps and kept in boarding schools." And, in essence, kidnapping (in many cases) of children became the policy of this **war called "education."** In 1887, Commissioner J.D.C. Atkins' Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs concluded:

> It is apparent that we have advanced far enough in the education of Indian children to be able to say that what for a time was an experiment no longer admits of uncertainty. The Indian can be educated equally with the white or the colored man, and his education is gradually being accomplished, and at a less cost per capita from year to year as the

> work proceeds... One thing is clear, the Government has made a wonderfully economic move in undertaking to educate these people in any kind of schools instead of fighting them. The cost of the schools is immeasurably less than that of the wars which they supplant...(Atkins, 1887, pp. xvi-xvii)

The years of agony suffered collectively by these children, their families, and communities must culminate in a sensitive "righting of the wrongs," and assist Natives and non-Natives alike to appreciate the dynamics of this democratic society where humanity is valued, and mistakes are looked at candidly and corrected, rather than continued in our American and state history textbooks, as they are today.

In his introduction to *The American Heritage Book of Indians*, President Kennedy wrote:

> Before we can set out on the road to success, we have to know where we are going, and before we can know that, we must determine where we have been in the past. It seems a basic requirement to study the history of our Indian people. America has much to learn about the heritage of our American Indians. Only through this study can we, as a nation, do what must be done if our treatment of the American Indians is not to be marked down for all times as a national disgrace. (Kennedy, 1961, p. 7)

There are many writings which show the ethnocentric attitude prevalent in the Nineteenth Century. President Grant in his second inaugural address on March 4, 1873, declared,

> Our superiority of strength and advantages of civilization should make us lenient toward the Indian. The wrong inflicted upon him should be taken into account, and the balance placed to his credit. The moral view of the question should be considered and the question asked, Can not the Indian be made a useful and productive member of society by proper teaching and treatment? If the effort is made in good faith, we will stand better before the civilized nations of the earth and in our own consciences for having made it. (Richardson, 1910, p. 4176)

In these confusing and dismal times for the American Native, our tribal leaders showed great skills in negotiation and far-sighted vision for the future of the children, **even seven generations to come.** The Omaha leader, Standing Bear (*Standing Bear v. Crook, 1879)* had to renounce his tribal affiliation to win a writ of habeas corpus to keep from forcefully being removed to Indian Territory.

As attempts were being made to distance children from their cultural traditions and homes, the "English-only" movement was begun to ensure this end. The "Peace Commission" of 1868 was composed of Generals Sherman, Harney, Sanborn and Terry with Commissioner of Indian Affairs Taylor.

The Indian Peace Commissions were actually created to destroy Native languages as a premise for peace, rather than looking at issues of injustice. Language was equated with loyalty. Henderson, Tappan and Augar reported that between Indian and non-Indian it was,

> The difference in language, which in a great measure barred intercourse and a proper understanding each of the other's motives and intentions.
>
> Now, by educating the children of these tribes in the English language these differences would have disappeared, and civilization would have followed at once...
>
> Through sameness of language is produced sameness of sentiment, and thought; customs and habits are molded and assimilated in the same way, and thus in process of time the differences producing trouble would have been gradually obliterated... In the difference of language to-day lies two-thirds of our trouble... Schools should be established, which children should be required to attend; their barbarous dialect should be blotted out and the English language substituted. (Atkins, 1887, p. xx)

The alternatives for Indians, once again, as seen by Secretary of Interior Schurz, were extermination or civilization. He issued "English-only" regulations in 1880 and again in 1884, threatening loss of government money if any Indian language was taught.

> English language only must be taught the Indian youth placed there for educational and industrial training at the expense of the Government. If Dakota or any other language is taught such children, they will be taken away and their support by the Government will be withdrawn from the school. (Atkins, 1887, p. xxi)

Again the prevailing ethnocentric attitude was expressed in Commissioner of Indian Affairs J. D. C. Atkins' 1887 report:

> Every nation is jealous of its own language, and no nation ought to be more so than ours, which approaches nearer than any other nationality to the perfect protection of its people. True Americans all feel that the Constitution, laws, and institutions of the United States, in their adaptation to the wants and requirements of man, are superior to those

> of any other country; and they should understand that by the spread of the English language will these laws and institutions be more firmly established and widely disseminated. Nothing so surely and perfectly stamps upon an individual a national characteristic as language... Only English has been allowed to be taught in the public schools in the territory acquired by this country from Spain, Mexico, and Russia, although the native populations spoke another tongue. All are familiar with the recent prohibitory order of the German Empire forbidding the teaching of the French language in either public or private schools in Alsace or Lorraine... If the Indians were in Germany or France or any other civilized country, they should be instructed in the language there used. As they are in an English-speaking country, they must be taught the language which they must use in transacting business with the people of this country. No unity or community of feeling can be established among different peoples unless they are brought to speak the same language, and thus become imbued with like ideas of duty....
>
> The instruction of the Indians in the vernacular is not only of no use to them, but is detrimental to the cause of their education and civilization, and no school will be permitted on the reservation in which the English language is not exclusively taught....
>
> It is believed that if any Indian vernacular is allowed to be taught by the missionaries in schools on the Indian reservations, it will prejudice the youthful pupil as well as his untutored and uncivilized or semi-civilized parent against the English language, and, to some extent at least, against Government schools in which the English language exclusively has always been taught. (Atkins, 1887, pp. xxi-xxiii)

Luther Standing Bear, a Carlisle Indian School graduate and an educator, wrote:

> At that time, teaching amounted to very little. It really did not require a well-educated person to teach on the reservation. The main thing was to teach the children to write their names in English, then came learning the alphabet and how to count. I liked this work very well, and the children were doing splendidly. The first reading books we used had a great many little pictures in them. I would have the children read a line of English, and if they did not understand all they had read, I would explain it to them in Sioux. This made the studies very interesting. (Standing Bear, 1928, pp. 192-193)

Luther Standing Bear lamented **that the teachers who were sent to reservations knew nothing about the children they were to teach, they knew only books. The vivid contrast again in cultural values resulted in despair and confusion for those Native students.**

There were exceptions to this, particularly by the missionaries, who were also in favor of ending tribal traditions, **but as educators, felt that the students would ultimately learn English better if they were allowed to learn in their Native language the first three or four years.** A correspondent who visited the Santee Sioux in Nebraska observed better educational facilities than most of the other northern tribes. It is interesting to note that in 1870 the Santee Sioux Normal School started training Native teachers, and made extensive use of the Dakota language. (Reyhner and Eder, 1989, p. 50)

At the mission school, Dakota was taught, and all the elementary books and the Bible were in Dakota. After they were taught to read in Dakota, they were given a book with illustrations explained in Dakota and English. The correspondent here reported,

> Mr. Riggs [Reverend Alfred L. Riggs] is of the opinion that first teaching the children to read and to write in their own language enables them to master English with more ease when they take up that study; and he thinks, also, that a child beginning a four years' course with the study of Dakota would be further advanced in English at the end of the term than one who had not been instructed in Dakota. (*Report*, 1880, p. 77)

Dr. Alden testified to the Board of Indian Commissioners:

> Our missionaries feel very decidedly on this point, and that is as to their work in the teaching of English. They believe that it can be better done by using Dakota also, and that it will be done by them in their regular educational methods. While it is not true that we teach only English, it is true that by beginning in the Indian tongue and then putting the students into English studies our missionaries say that after three or four years their English is better than it would have been if they had begun entirely with English. So our missionaries say that if this experiment is to be carried out at Hampton and Carlisle, let us have the same opportunity to show at our school at Santee what can be done there. And we think, after so large an experience, that the same work can be accomplished at the Santee Agency, and reaching far more in number than can be done by simply transporting them to a distance [to an off-reservation boarding school]. But with the two together we believe that a

> splendid work will be done both in the way of English education and civilization of the Indian. (*Report*, 1880, p. 98)

The Santee Normal School, although one of the best, received criticism for teaching Natives to read and write in their own language. Many missionaries continued efforts to preserve the Native languages by researching and publishing dictionaries. Some of these dictionaries still serve the people today.

But, despite the expressed, educated opinions that Native languages were worth preserving, the Indian Bureau stepped up efforts to end, not only the Native languages, but all Native customs and religion. In 1881, the Sun Dance was banned, and led the way in 1885 for the general policy which forbade traditional Native religious ceremonies and all customs relating to those ceremonies. In 1886, Native men were ordered to cut their hair short. The cultural genocide was continued through allotment of American Indian lands. **It is important to note that current research indicates similar conclusions as those of the early missionaries: that language-minority students who receive at least three to four years of formal schooling in Native language, generally achieve more in all subject areas, including the second language. Certainly, self-image is more intact.**

Education Barriers: Where is Equity?

In 1991, we have many barriers which stand in the way of equity for Indian students. The failure of national policy and the prevalence of stereotypical attitudes about American Indians were addressed in Part I: A National Tragedy: Subcommittee Findings. Felix Cohen was quoted:

> It is a pity that so many Americans today think of the Indian as a romantic or comic figure in American history without contemporary significance. In fact, the Indian plays much the same role in our American society that the Jews played in Germany. Like the miner's canary, the Indian marks the shift from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, reflects the rise and fall in our democratic faith. (Cohen, 1953 as cited in 1969 Report on Indian Education, p. 9.)

Among the barriers are certainly issues of number, coupled with scarcity of financial resources. The diversity of American Indian and Alaska Natives is a challenge to anyone who really wants his/her teaching to empower students in retaining Native language and Native culture. The diversity includes skin color, height, hair texture, and facial features. The ways of survival were also quite diverse, ranging from fishing, hunting and gathering to agricultural lifestyles. Native people spoke approximately 2,200 different languages, which anthropologists have attempted to categorize into six major language families. Political institutions also varied greatly, as they still do today. There were/are contrasts of confederacies to small family units and contrasts of warring ways and peaceful ways. Students learn much about diversity when they study the various homes, clothing, tools, environment, foods, hunting methods, oral traditions, political organizations and world view. A class project of charting diversity could cover all school walls, and greatly increase the knowledge base of not only students, but teachers.

Ironically, when studying diversity, a realization of some uniting similarities will emerge. Spirituality was/is at the core of the belief systems, and permeated/permeates not only ceremony and ritual, but everyday life. We hold deep respect for the earth and acknowledge that all life is sacred, and does not belong to us, rather we are stewards. Native beliefs uphold an unparalleled respect for the rights and dignity of each individual. Both individual and tribal autonomy were/are maintained. Consensus had/has to be reached before decisions could be made. Great respect was/is given to Elders. Children were/are revered. Generosity and sharing what one has is another Native value. All these beliefs are integrated into a holistic style of living, and express the connectedness of life. There are subtle communication nuances that also spread across Native cultures. Many of these similarities are noticeably opposite mainstream America's ways. The values in themselves are seen by some as barriers to communication and to "progress."

The supplementary nature of Indian education and bilingual programs creates difficulty in integrating language and culture into the regular school curriculum. Reyhner notes that educators are searching for ways to improve the poor student achievement that has been documented in all the major studies of Indian education (for example, Fuchs & Havihurst, 1972/1983; Meriam 1928). Gilliland (1986) lists eight sociocultural factors that are potentially responsible for this poor academic achievement:

- Differences between Native culture and school culture
- Ignorance of Native culture among school staff

- Differences between students' and teachers' values
- Difference in Native students' learning styles
- Poor motivation of Indian students
- Language differences of students and teachers
- Students' home and community problems, and
- Inappropriate use of tests with Indian students.

Other barriers which directly affect the education of our children are the lack of Native teachers and administrators in the schools. Also missing, when Native values are considered, are eminent persons. The Elders are the ones who hold the most knowledge, the key to keeping our treasures, our cultures and languages intact. Alternative certification must be provided to guarantee survival of our people. The schools have ways to certify Spanish, French and German teachers (FOREIGN LANGUAGES!) but what of **our national treasures, our Native Languages?**

John Tippeconnic, III states that "the total population of American Indians is less than one percent of the total population of the United States. There are more Blacks, more Hispanics, and more Asians. American Indians are truly a minority among minorities. This fact has political, economic, and social consequences when money is allocated or programs developed; or when data is collected for minority groups. Often American Indians are forgotten because of their small numbers or grouped under "other" when data is collected and analyzed. At times it appears that American Indians are just low in priority when compared to other ethnic or special interest groups." (Tippeconnic,)

The American Indian and Alaska Native are often thought of as vanishing races, museum relics. In The Smithsonian Institution, The National Museum of Natural History, a teacher recently was overheard answering a question from one of her schoolchildren: "Where are the Indians now?" to which the teacher replied, "Oh, I don't think there are Indians anymore."

To this incident, hundreds more could be added. There is a touching poem by Simon Oritz called "The Significance of a Veteran's Day" in which he says: "I happen to be a veteran/ but you can't tell in how many ways/ unless I tell you."..which he then proceeds to do in a typically Indian manner:

> Caught now, in the midst of wars/ against foreign disease, missionaries,/ canned food, Dick and Jane textbooks,/ IBM cards,/ Western philosophies. General/ Electric, I am talking about how we have been/ able/ to survive insignificance.

American Indian and Alaska Native leaders and Elders are struggling to retain their cultures and languages, their values and belief structures in the face of being an invisible minority in their Native land.

In 17 states there are English-only laws. I don't understand that philosophy/movement, but I see it all around me. I recently attended a most inspiring and hope-filled national meeting called "Keepers of the Treasures" in Hominy, Oklahoma, with the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the Osage Nation hosting a tribal cultural heritage/historic preservation conference. Upon returning to my home in central Oklahoma, only about 100 miles away, I bought our local paper and was shocked and dismayed to read the following editorial by Ed Livermore, Jr., entitled "English Assailed by Hypocrites":

> America could someday become a poly-lingual babel if we fail to insist the English language remain the only one used in public and private business affairs.
>
> American humor describes the problem. Perhaps you heard the joke about California voters recently approving Proposition 7-11 which made English the official language of convenience stores! Such humor only underscores what is a very serious problem.
>
> There is virtually no support in the nation for discourse to be conducted in foreign languages for the convenience of those who don't wish to learn English. But certain ethnic leaders are raising such demands. They are doing so in an organized and single-minded way, and they are winning skirmish after skirmish against the disorganized opposition of the general public and elected officials.
>
> Newcomer classes are packed nationwide with immigrants who recognize that the best way to share the benefits of America is to speak English well. But some ethnic groups, particularly Hispanic, reject the melting pot concept, resist assimilation as some sort of betrayal of their culture and demand government pay for the cost of maintaining bilingual institutions.
>
> Here are the fruits of their fight so far: bilingual ballots and voting aids in many jurisdictions and publicly funded voter registration campaigns aimed solely at those who vote in a foreign language. In education, those who favor developing foreign language pressure groups are winning against those

who wish to build a bridge to help immigrant children learn English.

It appears to us that bilingualism could better be named "anti-assimilationism." This is particularly troubling because right now our nation is receiving the largest wave of immigration in history, and the tide will not decrease. This gigantic influx strains the ability of America to assimilate newcomers and provides a fertile opportunity for hypocrites who seize upon the language issue to turn minorities into pressure groups.

There is one organization attempting to do something about this problem: U.S. English, a nonprofit tax-exempt organization in Washington, D. C. The chairman of U.S. English is S. I. Hayakawa, a former United States Senator of Japanese extraction.

What must be done is to adopt a constitutional amendment to establish English as the nation's official language. Laws mandating multilingual ballots must be repealed, and funds for bilingual education programs should be targeted at short-term transition programs only.

This doesn't mean English should become the refuge for redneck chauvinism. U. S. English includes the following among its guiding principles: "The study of foreign languages should be encouraged" and "the rights of individuals and groups to use other languages must be respected. But in a pluralistic nation such as ours, government should foster the similarities that unite us, rather than the differences that separate us." (Livermore, Dec. 7, 1990, pp. 1-2)

This article is reminiscent of federal policy for the last few hundred years. **Will we progress with positive action and respect for humanity or will we backslide into more of the same ethnocentric lack of concern and awareness for issues of justice and basic human respect? Will we realize that the Native languages of North America are our treasures to keep? We must decide today. Our Elders are dying.**

The American Indian Policy Review Commission (1977) concludes that: One of the greatest obstacles faced by the Indian today in his drive for self-determination and a place in this nation is the American public's ignorance of the historical relationship of the United States with Indian tribes and the lack of general awareness in the status of the American Indian in our society today.

American Indians and Alaska Natives are unique by having a legal government-to-government relationship between their sovereign Native nations and the United States government. There is no other minority or ethnic group with this status. It is based on treaties (approximately 400 treaties between the years 1778-1871, of which 120 have specific provisions for education). Education was one of the services exchanged for land. **Education is an entitlement for American Indians and Alaska Natives, not a handout. Understanding this unique relationship is necessary in order to fathom the complex nature of Native education today. Education has been thought of as a privilege, but actually is a right, based on trust responsibility.** There are several laws already on the books which mandate multilingual and multicultural Native education but are not being implemented:

- *Public Law 100-297, Section 5106* (formerly 25 CFR 32.4) which stipulates that "The Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs shall, through the Director of the Office of Indian Education Programs, provide for a comprehensive multicultural, and multilingual education program including the production and use of instructional materials, culturally appropriate methodologies, and teaching and learning strategies that will reinforce, preserve, and maintain Indian and Alaskan Native languages, cultures, and histories..." This has been in the CFR since 1979 but the BIA has refused to implement it. Now that it has become a statute, the BIA is required to do so, but for 1990, 1991, and 1992, they have not asked for any money to implement it. (Locke, INAR Task Force Testimony, San Diego, CA, 1990)
- *Public Law 100-297, Section 5106* also requires the Assistant Secretary to assist tribes with development of departments of education, educational codes, and plans. Again this has been part of the CFR since 1979 but has not been implemented. It has been a statute since 1988. Despite having no money, six tribes — Northern Ute, Southern Ute, Tohono O'Odham, Pasqua-Yaqui, Red Lake Band of Chippewa, and Mille Lac's band of Chippewa — have enacted language and culture codes which their tribal governments require within the exterior boundaries of their reservations. These codes are very comprehensive and they have the full force and effect of law. (Locke, INAR Task Force Testimony, San Diego, CA, 1990)

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) has recognized these critical issues of cultural diversity and has adopted

new standards which require that teacher education institutions give evidence of planning for multicultural education in the curricula. In 1978, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) in collaboration with The Teacher Corps, United States Department of Education, published a most definitive work, *The Schooling of Native America*. It is an excellent example of quality ideas and blueprints for action; although, I believe it is not yet utilized in ways that will impact our educational system.

Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote an article recently called "Knowing and Understanding: Traditional Education in the Modern World." He explains that education in an English-American context resembles indoctrination more than it does other forms of teaching because it insists on implanting a particular body of knowledge and a specific view of the world which does not correspond to the life experiences that people have or might be expected to encounter... Because the product is so refined and concise, education has become something different and apart from the lives of people and is seen as a set of technical beliefs which, upon mastering, admit the pupil to the social and economic structures of the larger society. In this article Mr. Deloria also identified two other critical problems in education today:

- "Education trains professionals, but it does not produce people." The goal of modern education today is to train workers to function within institutional settings as part of a greater social economic entity. (Deloria, 1990)
- "The European American separation of knowledge into professional expertise and personal growth is an insurmountable barrier for many Native students. The problem arises because in traditional Native society there is no separation. There is in fact a reversal of the sequence in which non-Native education occurs: in traditional society, the goal is to ensure personal growth and then develop expertise." In our English-American system of education today, elements of kinship and service to one's people are rarely considered. (Deloria, 1990)

Ethnocentrism is at the root of many problems in Native education. It creates the following cultural and linguistic dilemmas (and more):

- Curriculum content and design which are not culturally- relevant, authentic, tribal-specific, nor free of cultural bias and stereotypes.
- Conflict of values, attitudes and behavior which result in confusion.
- Negation of self for Native student; robs him/her of pride of cultural identity; impedes success and makes student feel inferior and insecure.
- Too few Native teachers and administrators.
- Lack of preparation of teachers and administrators to respond effectively to the cultural and language minority student.
- Lack of effective action or change on a national level in the way teachers are educated to respond effectively to the culturally different child.
- Lack of effective staff development and in-service training for working teachers.
- Extremely poor textbooks and history classes (American history, state history and absence of local history). Textbooks relate inaccuracies and perpetuate the myth of "the Indian." Most are written by non-Native authors. Most are filled with propaganda from the mainstream society's perspective, untruths, half-truths, obvious omissions, and terminology laden with cultural bias.
- Virtually no mandated (local, state or federal) classes in the United States in which all students learn about accurate history of Natives in America (pre-history, history, transition, contemporary, and implications for the future). There are piecemeal, token efforts which allow students to think they've learned the history, when in reality they have just learned "the state's version" of a dark side of American history.
- Lack of accountability to students, parents and Native governments and communities.
- Many classroom-based language development activities disembody language and culture, depriving students of the opportunity to use language and culture in real communication. Often verbal labels are confused with the infinite creativity of a language.
- Classroom experiences which are not compatible with children's learning styles and community insights and values. Differences between local Native culture and school culture.

- Lack multicultural approach across disciplines on all grade levels.
- Insufficient and ineffective educational outreach to parents and families, especially to families who are alienated.
- Inflexibility of public school systems to provide creative scheduling and instruction to Native students.
- Failure of school systems to look honestly at their long history of prejudice, discrimination, and institutionalized racism. Failure of these systems to place "anti-racism" educational efforts and actions at the top of the educational agenda with students.
- Failure of schools to provide creative opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native students to access positions of leadership within student bodies and communities.
- Failure of Native governments and communities to accept responsibility that they can determine the future of their people in all areas, including education. Failure to break out of the perception of themselves as victims.
- Focus on past, if anything, rather than dynamic contemporary cultures.
- High anxiety situations that occur when environment is threatening, unaccepting or devalues a child's culture or language or family.
- National and state policies fail to adequately address and mandate meaningful change.

Current Conditions of Language and Culture: Act Now!

The nature of language and culture today is as varied as the diversity of the Indian nations themselves.

In spite of federal policy intended to destroy Indian languages, it is estimated that 206 indigenous languages are spoken in the United States today (Education Week, Aug. 2, 1989). Leap (1981) documents (Table 1) that the remaining languages survive with different levels of fluency by showing the relationship between the number of speakers and age range. Of these surviving native languages, it is estimated that approximately 50 are on the death list. **If we value diversity...if we value language and its connection to culture, we must act now. There is no more time to consider the question.**

According to Bea Medicine, the prohibition of Native language use has had great repercussions on the communicative skills of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Language is the core of the expressive elements of culture, music, song, dance, art and religion. She also points out the fact languages have persisted, attests to the great vigor of Native cultures and their members. It also indicates the value placed on Native languages by parents and grandparents who still teach their children a Native language. To them, language is critical in maintaining cultural continuity and Native identity. (B. Medicine, 1981, p. 3)

Some current examples of language preservation from The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. include:

1. An example of **flourishing language** is Navajo, with well over 100,000 speakers, more than any other American Indian language north of Mexico. It is also the largest tribe and has the largest reservation. Most Navajo children on the reservation learn only Navajo until they begin school. Louisiana Coushatta is also a flourishing language, with a population of only 1,000 people. The most important indicators of a flourishing language can be summarized as follows:
   a. It has speakers of all ages, some of them monolingual.
   b. Population increases also lead to the number of speakers.
   c. It is used in all communicative situations.
   d. The language adapts to the changing culture of the community.
   e. Speakers become increasingly more literate.
2. An example of an **enduring language** is Hualapai. The Hualapai and related Havasupai have fewer than 2,000 people, of which 95 percent, including most children, speak Hualapai. The language is not expanding. An enduring language is characterized in this way:
   a. It has speakers of all ages; most or all are bilingual.
   b. The population of speakers tends to remain constant over time.
   c. English tends to be used exclusively in some situations.
   d. The language adapts to the changing culture of the community.

e. There is little or no Native language literacy in the community.

3. A **declining language** is Shoshoni. The Shoshini nation has approximately 7,000 members, but their language is now spoken by no more than 75 percent of the Shoshoni people, with an ominous concentration of abilities in older people. The characteristics of a declining language are:
   a. There are proportionately more older speakers than younger.
   b. Younger speakers are not altogether fluent in the language.
   c. The number of speakers decreases over time, even though the population may be increasing.
   d. The entire population is bilingual and English is preferred in many situations.
   e. The language begins to conform to and resemble English.
   f. The population is essentially illiterate in the language.

4. Pit River exemplifies an **obsolescent language**. More than half the Native languages are obsolescent. Perhaps fifty tribes have fewer than ten speakers, all of them elderly. The language can be heard only when the Elders get together. The characteristics of an obsolescent language are:
   a. An age gradient of speakers that terminates in the adult population.
   b. The language is not taught to children in the home.
   c. The number of speakers declines very rapidly.
   d. The entire population is bilingual and English is preferred in essentially all situations.
   e. The language is inflexible. It no longer adapts to new situations.
   f. There is no literacy.

5. An example of an **extinct language** is Chumash. Approximately 25 years ago, the last speaker died, although the language had not been used for many years before that.

According to the 1980 U.S. Census there are 20,000 speakers of Eskimo-Aleut languages; 3,662 speakers of Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit languages; 150 speakers of Tsimshian; and 100 speakers of Haida. In total, in 1980 there were 23,912 speakers of Alaska Native languages out of a population count of 53,430 persons. Roughly 45 percent of Alaska Natives spoke an Alaska Native language in 1980. Presently, that number has decreased and continues to do so. (MacLean, 1990, p. 5)

The following testimony from Native educator, Ahgeak MacLean of the Alaska Department of Education, summarizes current conditions of Native languages and cultures/problems and solutions including creative policy and legislation:

> For most children who speak an Alaska Native language with more competence than they speak English, the language of instruction and language development activities is in that Alaska Native language. The language that they speak is accepted in the school and is used to teach them until the second grade. (Henze, et al, 1990). Most of these children are Alaska Yupiks or Siberian Yupiks.

In regions where the children still speak their Native language, the primary language of instruction from kindergarten through the second grade is usually in that language. After the second grade, instruction in the Native language is reduced due to various factors, including the shortage of bilingual teachers, lack of curricular materials, and most importantly the lack of commitment by the community and the school to promote the growth and enrichment of the Alaska Native language. (MacLean, 1990, p. 7)

Since the support for bilingualism has been low, and the status of Native languages as ones worth studying has also been low, teaching of Native languages has not been actively promoted by school boards and administrators. This lack of commitment and enthusiasm for Alaska Native languages as the language of instruction or of study in schools, I believe, is the direct result of the negative attitudes and social stigma that have evolved around bilingualism and biculturalism, and against the worth of Native languages and cultures in Alaska. For many years, being bilingual was seen as a negative attribute for optimal learning to occur. **Current research strongly suggests that being proficient in more than one language enhances positive cognitive development**; although many administrators, teachers, and parents still believe that instruction in Alaska Native languages will retard English language use and proficiency of children. (MacLean, 1990, p. 7)

The decreasing numbers of Alaska Native students in bilingual-bicultural programs may indicate that many Alaska Native students are not receiving any instruction which promotes further development of their Native language for cognitive or affective purposes. This trend is disturbing in light of educational research that strongly suggests that students' school success appears to

reflect both the more solid cognitive and academic foundation developed through intensive primary language instruction and the reinforcement of their cultural identity. (Cummins, 1986)

In September of 1987, in hope of rectifying this situation, the Alaska Department of Education, through the Office of the Commissioner and in collaboration with some members of the Alaska Native community, the University of Alaska, and school districts initiated a process to establish an **Alaska Native Language Policy for schools in Alaska. The policy acknowledges that Alaska's indigenous languages are unique and essential elements of Alaska's heritage, and thus distinct from immigrant languages.** It recognizes that although some children learn their Native language in the home and community, many Alaska Native children no longer have the opportunity to learn their heritage languages in this way.

The policy encourages schools to teach, and use as the medium of instruction, the Alaska Native language of the local community to the extent desired by the parents of that community. This is a renewed attempt by educators to establish a process whereby Alaskan Natives can make decisions concerning their Native languages for the educational system. It is hoped that parents of Alaska Native children will begin to use their Native language much more freely with their children when they learn that current research indicates the use of the minority language in the home is not a handicap to childrens' academic progress (Chesarek, 1981; Bhatnager, 1980; Carey and Cummins, 1979; Cummins and Mulcahy, 1978; Ramirez and Politzer, 1976; Yee and La Forge, 1974); that it is okay to use their Native languages at home with their families.

The Beginning of a New Day

In June 1988, Indian people from all over the country met in Tempe, AZ for the purpose of attending the Annual Native American Language Issues Institute. The tone of the Institute was unique that year. Everything that could go wrong did. As NALI went into its third and final morning the round table discussion began with separate issues. However, as each table and its debaters began to bring forth concerns, one topic was repeated over and over: NALI must adopt a resolution that speaks up for our beliefs about Native language and that message must be strong. Participants, after all, were sitting in a state which was preparing to vote on an English-Only bill. Native people were *more* than concerned.

A resolution was adopted and the path that it traveled over the course of the next three years would become a matter of public record. This document would rewrite and formally reverse a 104-year old federal policy which had been developed to destroy Indian languages and hence our cultures.

Those OLD federal policies were clear. On December 14, 1886, the policy forbidding the use of any Indian language was announced. (House Executive Document No. 1. 50th Congress, 1st session, Serial 2542, pp. 12-21). The document states **"...No books in any Indian language must be used or instruction given in that language...the rule will be strictly enforced.**170 A supplemental Report on Indian Education of December 1, 1889 (House Executive Document No. 1. 51st Congress, 1st Session, Serial 2725, pp. 9397, states, **"Education should seek the disintegration of the tribes. Only English should be allowed to be spoken and only English speaking teachers should be employed in schools.**170

These policies did work. At the very time they were becoming law, we had some 604 Indian languages that were, for the most part, healthy and alive. (McGee, The Smithsonian Institute, 1896.) Today as a direct result of that disintegration, we have about 200 Indian languages left. Of that 200 it is estimated that 1/4 are on the death list.

As the Native American Language Act labored its way through the bureaucratic process, Native people kept the vigil. On October 23, 1989, Senator Inouye introduced the following bill.

S13851 & S13852 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD-SENATE October 23, 1990

S. 1781. A bill to establish as the policy of the United States the preservation, protection, and promotion of the rights of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages, to take steps to foster such use, practice and development, for other purposes; to the Select Committee on Indian Affairs.

NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE ACT

Mr. INOUYE. Mr. President, I am pleased to introduce legislation to establish that it is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights of Native

Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages.

Mr. President, as you know, traditional languages are an integral part of Native American cultures, heritages, and identities. History, religion, literature, and traditional values are all transmitted through language. When a language is lost, the ability to express concepts in a certain way is also lost. For example, names for objects or events in nature reflect the way people understand those phenomena. When they no longer know the name of something in their own language, they no longer have the same relationship with it, and part of their culture dies along with this communication loss.

As part of its termination policy, the U.S. Government sought to abolish Native languages. Indigenous Americans, including American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians were punished for speaking in their Native tongues. The purpose of this policy was to mainstream Native peoples so that they would no longer be different from non-Native Americans.

Fortunately, this policy has not been repudiated. The Federal Government's policy of self-determination has meant that Native Americans can decide for themselves how to manage their own governmental affairs, educate their children, and live their lives. While some Native languages have become virtually extinct before Native people realized the magnitude of their loss, there are now strong efforts nationwide among Native people to recover and perpetuate this part of their cultural heritage.

The bill I am introducing today is similar to the joint resolution which I introduced at the end of the 100th Congress and which passed the Senate. Instead of a joint resolution, I am introducing this initiative as a bill to make clear the serious intent that Federal policy supports the use, practice, and development of Native languages. This proposal is based on a resolution adopted by the Native American Languages Issues Institute. I believe that it is appropriate that Native people and language practitioners participated in developing this proposal. It is consistent with my policy in dealing with Native American issues to have the solution come from Native peoples. Clearly, the initiative for developing and implementing Native language use will continue to come from the people who speak their Native languages. With the explicit support of the U.S. Government for these efforts, we will ensure that the self-determination policy of the Government is carried out and that we in Congress and Federal government are continuing to fulfill our responsibility to the Native people of this country.

Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the Native American Language Act, a bill introduced this day by the chairman of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs, my esteemed colleague from Hawaii, Senator INOUYE. This bill will establish as the policy of the United States the preservation, protection and promotion of the rights of Native Americans to speak, practice, and develop Native American languages, and to foster the use and practice of Native American languages. This bill will provide a basis for the United States and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to begin to reverse the policies of the past which resulted in the erosion of Native culture and language by forcibly preventing Native American children from speaking their Native languages in Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools. An entire generation of American Indian children were forcibly deprived of their Native Language, and in turn their culture, through the policies of the Federal government.

It is now time for this Government to develop a uniform Federal policy that supports the use of Native languages in schools. A policy that will ensure the continued survival of Native American cultures, literatures, and histories through Native American languages. A policy that allows Native American children to learn in their own languages and a policy that encourages academic success and achievement among Native American children. Mr. President, I would like to commend Senator INOUYE for his initiative and fine work on this bill. I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of this badly needed legislation.

Although the Bill was to repeatedly gain unanimous approval in the Senate, it was to continually reach impasse not in House, but rather in the House Education & Labor Committee. This baffled many people including non-Indians. Especially when that very committee stated in disbelief "that more written and oral support has come across its table on this Native American Language Act than any other Indian Education Issue."

How could it be that, that committee, with its learned members, could not remember some very basic facts. The very fact that this country has repeatedly engaged in war and war-like conflict when their beliefs and freedoms of religion were threatened.

And here, once again, were Indian people fighting for their basic beliefs, the belief in the need for language. After all, when a people loses its language, it has lost its cul-

ture and the right to a basic freedom: the freedom of its religion and its beliefs.

After many meetings and much encouragement, the Bill was again introduced and again it passed the Senate unanimously on the evening of October 11, 1990. Then, in the early hours of October 12, 1990, in less than 70 seconds, the House unanimously passed a bill that its Education and Labor Committee had sat on for three years. American Indians all over rejoiced and waited with anticipation for President Bush to bring into law, our new policy.

On October 30, 1990 at 6:13 p.m. President Bush signed into legislation Public Law 101-477. Title I of that Bill is the NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE ACT.

That act brings to Native people, not only a change in the old policy, but also the following:

Declaration of Policy

SEC. 104.
It is the policy of the United States to —

1. preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages.
2. allow exception to teacher certification requirements of Federal programs, and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach in Native American languages, and to
3. encourage State and territorial governments to make similar exceptions;
   A. Native American language survival,
   B. educational opportunity,
   C. increased student success and performance,
   D. increased student awareness and knowledge of their culture and history, and
   E. increased student and community pride:
4. encourage State and local education programs to work with Native American parents, educators, and other Native American governing bodies in the implementation of programs to put this policy into effect;
5. recognize the right of Indian Tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior;
6. fully recognize the inherent right of Native American governing bodies, States, territories, and possessions of the United States to take action on, and give official status to, their Native American languages for the purpose of conducting their own business;
7. support the granting of comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a Native American language the same academic credit as comparable proficiency achieved through course work in a foreign language, with recognition of such Native American language proficiency by institutions of higher eduction as fulfilling foreign language entrance or degree requirements; and
8. encourage all institutions of elementary, secondary and higher eduction, where appropriate, to include Native American languages in the curriculum in the same manner as foreign languages and to grant proficiency in Native American languages the same full academic credit as proficiency in foreign languages.

Strategies for Success: Strengthen the Connection

Testimonies at the regional hearings for the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force were insightful, touching, and amazingly consistent when describing educational needs and concerns. Fortunately, we have some research, idea sharing through journals, newspapers, Native education meetings, and the old "Moccasin Telegraph" to continue to formulate new solutions for our educational challenges. We must pursue them with renewed vision and strength of purpose.

Assistant Secretary John MacDonald wrote a recent editorial on Readiness, the first national education goal. What he wrote is very appropriate to this INAR Task Force's charge to consider that more than the student be made ready:

> Readiness...in my opinion...holds the key to all the other national goals for education. A child's experiences in his first few years are a central determinant of his future development, so attention on early intervention symbolizes a focus on prevention rather than remediation. By readiness we mean not only the readiness of a child to enter school, but also the readiness of the school to provide an

> opportunity for every child to succeed...the school must provide equity and personalization in its approach. By personalization, we mean that each child should have an opportunity to learn in a way that best suits his learning style and needs, regardless of handicap or language proficiency. Let us make sure each child has equal access to school and receives equal opportunities once there. Let's also make sure that every school has standards to ensure program quality...

To ensure that schools in the United States are ready for Native children, it is necessary for educators to realize the relationship between language and culture. One of our First Nations Elders, Eli Taylor, of the Sioux Valley Reserve in Manitoba, provided a strong rationale for the revitalization of Native languages:

> Our Native language embodies a value system about how we ought to live and relate to each other...it gives a name to relations among kin, to roles and responsibilities among family members, to ties with the broader clan group...There are no English words for these relationships because your social and family life is different from ours. Now if you destroy this language, you not only break down these relationships, but you also destroy other aspects of our Indian way of life and culture, especially those that describe man's connection with nature, the Great Spirit, and the order of things. Without our language, we will cease to exist as a separate people.

It is apparent to me, after much investigation and 20 years of diverse experiences with Native students, communities, educators, and governments, that we perhaps have one point on which we are more unified than any other: **we all want the very best we can provide in educational experiences for our most precious treasures, our children**.

It is also apparent to me, more than ever before, that **our Native population has an incredibly brilliant pool of educators, parents, Elders, tribal leaders, students, and families who are eloquent and articulate in expressing needs of the heart and mind.** This is no accident. It is one of those results of challenging circumstance. Through adversity, we have had to develop strength and endurance. Our recent history has been filled with conflict, adversity, pain, suffering, losses, and factionalism ... but our hearts have remained full of the ancient values of respect, generosity, love for our children, our Elders, and all of life's circle. Our minds keep the remembrance of oral tradition, the histories of our ancestors, the images of our grandparents, and even the memories of their memories. We are spiritually connected to our past, our present, and our future.

We, as Native educators, have had the "OPPORTUNITY" for many years to deal with educational reform on the local grass roots level, as well as state and national levels. We have learned needs assessment, design, curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation ...all within the context of community and tribal cultures. We have learned much. We have learned from our Elders, our children and each other. Now it is time to evolve ... to come full circle and put the best we have to give, together ... for our future, our children.

From testimony, research, and experience, I propose the following strategies to incorporate Native languages and Native cultures into our elementary and secondary curricula:

Community Participation and Community Control: A Necessity

Rosemary Ackley-Christensen, Director of Indian Education for Minneapolis public schools, testified in St. Paul:

> Tribal people need to come to the aid of Tribal children. Their education must be contrived by us from start to finish. Our Tribal governments must provide us with leadership to educate Tribal citizens. That big, powerful, rich system called public schooling, in these United States may be all right and just right for the immigrants and their children. It is not, and has not been even close to all right for our children. We Tribal people must structure the education of our children. We must, because we are citizens of dependent nations, appeal to and demand through American Laws and Congress the wherewithal to structure the educational system of our children **with our tribal governments and with public funds.** (Ackley-Christensen, INAR Task Force Testimony, St. Paul, MN 1990)

Communities must be the educators. They were in the past, they can be today. When communities produce education, values and beliefs are expressed, languages are spoken, songs are sung, and histories are heard. The people determine their priorities, and develop a loving, collective ownership of the curriculum which is produced. The curriculum is alive and used often.

> The best way we can initiate this change is to begin to work on the content of education, and not on the techniques and procedures of education. We must initiate the study of tribal customs on a grand scale and they must be taught at school on an equal basis

> with any other academic subject. But they must not be confined to the school or classroom. They must be under constant discussion with the community itself, and subject to continual and disciplined use by the people. Perhaps the first feature of revival would be to begin comprehensive studies of the old clan and kinship patterns, and establish social rules for the reinstitution of some of the old patterns of kinship responsibility. There is no good reason why we cannot expect every Indian to accept the old social responsibilities for his/her extended family, and why we cannot enforce social responsibilities for relatives on a deliberate and measurable scale of behavior. (Deloria, 1978, p. 25)

Traditional education among Native people assisted the children in finding meaning in life. Curriculum was well-balanced. Cognitive learning, the factual information necessary for survival was related to the affective, emotional learning through oral tradition and knowledge given by tribal Elders. Physical strength and skills were fully developed with games and activities. Social responsibility was developed through group experiences demonstrating the philosophy that we are born into a life of service — that we do not exist alone — that the community is important. All these learnings were connected to spirituality — the center of our existence.

Amid our cultural and linguistic diversities, there are generic values which unite us. These guiding principles for life could be a beginning focus for a tribal code of education, or actual curriculum content with interdisciplinary activities:

- Generosity — Cooperation
- Independence — Freedom
- Respect for Elders — Wisdom
- Interrelatedness — Love
- Courage — Responsibility
- Indirect Communication — Non-interference
- Silence — Reflection — Spirit

At a recent meeting in Oklahoma, a colleague summarized the issues of responsibility, equity and action: As long as we, the American Indian and Alaska Native parents, allow school policy makers to continue to educate our children as they have, then we are responsible for the rape of our beliefs, values, language, and health. Every local community should have curriculum that is designed to address its residents. Local education agencies who don't address community needs become active participants in the destructive deterioration of all children regardless of race. They segregate our children with daily dosages of "you're not equal to," "not as good as," "what you are is unimportant," "what you believe has no meaning." These messages are reiterated day after day, grade after grade, year after year with untruths in textbooks, negative and stereotypical teacher attitudes, and persons unprepared to deliver the message as teachers, which was written as a personal guarantee for every citizen of the United States. That message is **equality**, NOT upper class white rights, just plain old equal rights.

Granted, this process will not be easy, but it need not be complicated. All governments, local, state, and federal, have established educational goals to be accomplished by the year 2000. Unless stringent local changes and wide scale improvements are begun now, and proceed with rigor and enthusiasm, these goals will not be met, with few exceptions. The federal government has a responsibility to take the lead and disallow state and local education agencies the funds they are dependent on, unless they begin a viable and visible process to rectify the existing problems. Superficial pretense of meeting the needs of all children must not be tolerated. Standards must be developed, implemented, and ensured by the states.

The Process

States must establish learner outcomes which have high standards, yet take more than one race into consideration. Every district must have curriculum relevant to its community but also utilize multicultural approaches and methods. Every district must be responsible for utilizing the rich resources it has at hand, ***its community***. This doesn't mean holding one or two meetings where one Joe and one Jane show up and then conclude that parents don't care. Historically, schools have deliberately alienated its parents. Sadly, this trend continues today. This negative cycle must be broken. The few LEAs who have made significant sincere progress in establishing positive communication with parents must be nationally recognized and awarded the opportunity to share their secrets of success with all, raising the standards and the expectations of respectful relationships.

Textbook companies must be made to understand the need to fairly represent all people with truth in print or be shut down. Textbook commissions must assist each state in solving the problem of institutionalized racism by refusing to buy any books which denigrate any group or continue any stereotypes, cultural bias, or insufficient information (omission of history).

Every LEA school board should have representation of each minority in its district, elected by that minority.

Every LEA must have equal classroom representation of teacher to student in relationship to race.

Every LEA has the responsibility to recognize the relationship of language to culture, and establish programs which utilize the languages and which reflect their importance.

Teachers must be trained, retrained, or eliminated if they can-not meet all needs and the needs of our minority children. Where qualified teachers do not exist, then programs must be designed to allow for Special Certification to meet student needs until teachers can be trained.

Districts who receive federal funding must be forced to include Native parents in these communities the right to establish policies when their children generate those federal dollars. The ratio of parents has to be reflective to the number of children in the district, as well as the amount of money those children have created. These communities must be utilized where LEA expenditures include Impact Aid, Title V, Title VII, Johnson O'Malley., Chapter 2, Special Education, Title IV...

The federal government must take the initiative and positively enforce such laws as Title I of Public Law 101-477...

Without such changes, we can expect the continuance of the same unhealthy situations which have placed us in this crisis.

Culturally-Relevant Curriculum: It's About Time!

Great numbers in every geographical area responded to the INAR Task Force hearings in a most definite way concerning cultural relevance in curriculum. In the St. Paul hearing, Edward Benton-Banai is concerned with the social dysfunction among Native families and communities. He believes the concept of culturally-based curricula is a means of revitalizing Native cultural values and traditions that will in turn help minimize social dysfunction. (Testimony, 1990, St. Paul) The Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe School K-12 curriculum is "designed to incorporate the wisdom and beauty of the Ojibwe heritage and to teach necessary skills to live and compete in the modern technological society...The school is endorsed by our greatest community resource who are knowledgeable, capable, giving, and caring...the Elders of the Ojibwe Nation." In Montana, William L. LaForge, believes **curriculum should begin "at all local education agencies to reflect the local cultures and values and to address the bicultural classroom population and community."** Dr. Duane Hale of the University of Oklahoma, American Indian Institute, believes in preserving what is left through both audio and video, and collecting what has been written; from these documentations developing curriculum materials which will perpetuate culture and values and be an essential key to preventing social dysfunction.

David Gipp, President of United Tribes Technical College in Bismarck, North Dakota testifies that:

A. "There is a need to encourage state education agencies and public schools to institutionalize commitments toward the cultural preservation of American Indian communities through state Indian Education policies." Minnesota, Montana and Washington have adopted state policies that provide a foundation for progressive Indian education programs which potentially strengthen institutional commitments to preserve America's unique tribal cultures.

B. "The development of a culturally-relevant curriculum base by state education agencies is essential for the on-going promotion of curriculum reform toward multi-cultural education on a state-wide basis." North Dakota's Centennial activities included a four-part Native curriculum for primary, intermediate, junior high and high school levels based on whole language approaches, student-centered objectives and both traditional and contemporary content about American Indian culture. The author is Native educator, Sandra Fox. This kind of project can serve as a model for many curriculum units by LEAs and others, to improve educational opportunities, awareness, credibility and relevance for all students.

C. "Collaborative efforts among education resource agencies must be implemented and sustained for the on-going development of teaching skills of educational personnel, particularly teachers and administrators, who are currently serving Indian children." Summer language institutes and cultural curriculum workshops are offered in a number of states, including Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma... Incentives for participation must be considered. Among these are graduate credit, staff develop-

ment credits, and new curriculum resources.

D. "Schools should be recognized for successfully integrating Indian cultural curriculum resources into the local system." Gipp cited Minnesota's Cass Lake-Bena Schools, Nebraska's Macy Public Schools and South Dakota's Todd County Public Schools as exemplary in integrating curriculum resources and teaching methods that address the cultural needs of Indian students. How this was achieved needs to be documented so the process will be available for replication.

E. "There is a need to establish new teacher training requirements or to strengthen existing requirements that mandate minimum post secondary course work for teaching American Indian children. Gipp identifies Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota as having teacher certification requirements that allow potential teachers to be exposed to American Indian education. However, the courses have not been refined since their inception. He recommends that state education agencies follow the lead of Montana and North Dakota in examining what types of educational preparations are necessary to adequately train teachers for the instruction of American Indian students. (Gipp, INAR Task Force Hearing St. Paul, MN, p. 4)

An example of Native philosophy of education was submitted by Herbert John Benally which discussed the facets of a curriculum based upon traditional Navajo philosophy. "It provides a culturally-focused purpose for Navajo education which relates well to concern for student character and moral development as well as establishing principles for a program of general education which, if implemented, will provide for integration of the curriculum." Governor of Tesuque Pueblo, Gilbert Vigil, states that "no program, no matter how well funded or staffed, can succeed if it fails to incorporate and reflect the values of its community. American Indians fail to see their own values reflected in the majority educational system and until they do, they will continue to drop out. They too, must be given reasons for success and must be treated as cherished and valued members of our culture. The state of Indian education tells them one thing; Indians don't count." (1990, INAR Task Force, Testimony, Phoenix)

American Indians and Alaska Natives have worked at developing relevant learning experiences, and have had varying degrees of success. As a preliminary step, it is important to consider what use the curriculum will have, and what steps can be taken to assure it will be presented and used effectively. Too many pieces of curriculum have ended up on dusty shelves. We need to create learning materials and instructional techniques that will become a part of the core curriculum, and will be widely used and disseminated.

Robin Butterfield writes that:

> Culturally appropriate curriculum for Indians, in order to reflect the cultures of Indian students and their communities, must also take into consideration all these instructional elements...*materials* must be authentic, relevant, compatible, complete and neutral in content...the manner in which the cultural materials are presented remains consistent with the overall instructional framework and relevant to the goals of instruction. To be culturally appropriate, *instructional* techniques or methods should consider the sensitivity, empathy, relevance and effectiveness with which a lesson is taught. This means that teachers understand the culture of their students and their underlying value systems. Further, it requires that the learning environment be organized in a fashion most appropriate for the unique characteristics of the students. The *learner characteristics* simply dictate that the techniques and cultural appropriateness of the content differ for the learner population to be served. Culturally appropriate instructional resources include those designed to meet the specific educational and culturally-related academic needs of Indian students and those designed to enhance cultural understanding and appreciation among Indian and non-Indian students. (Butterfield, _____, p. 50-51) Two related monographs are very helpful in creating educational experiences of meaning for the American Indian and Alaska Native student. Both Butterfield's curriculum monograph and Pepper's teacher's monograph are noted to be practical, thorough and effective.

In written testimony, Susanna Hayes is concerned with the social, economic and cultural changes that have been forced upon the Lummi Tribe in Washington. Her article,"Educational Innovation at Lummi" relates that the Lummi Tribal School originated through the people's wish to provide their children with an educational program that reflects their unique cultural heritage and contemporary values. Expressive language development is encouraged through content based on Lummi observations, experiences, traditions and expressive conventions. Blending cultural content with conventional academic disciplines involve the study of life on a salt water peninsula. An

early childhood event with a Lummi grandma taught the little ones about herbs, plant identification, and the preparation and use of medicines. Both the Lummi and English languages were used. The teachers recorded the presentation and worked with factual content to study plant textures, colors, root systems, shapes, sizes and locations. The students wrote a book for her called "Grandma says," which included their newly learned knowledge from her and an illustration. Multiple copies of the text were distributed. The curriculum integrated language arts, science, art, personal and tribal history, and emphasized learning in the context of community relationship and serving one another. **The culturally relevant curricula requires school board leadership and community participation in many levels.** (Hayes, 1990, pp. 8-9)

In the southwest, the Hualapai Cultural Environmental Curriculum at Peach Springs, Arizona is based on a thematic, interdisciplinary format. Historical perspectives and contemporary experiences have been researched to form the content of the curriculum. Activities include interviewing Elders, harvesting native foods, reading rock writing, and researching traditional stories. **This manner of education validates the child's culture and language.** The Hualapai child's interactive learning environment is charted and included here to show the extensive planning and integration of culture and academics. The Hualapai Literacy Model uses language experience methods which encourage each child to speak and write about his/her own experiences on his/her own ability, while constructing meaning. The entire curriculum is language-based. A whole language approach is used to develop children's language and literacy skills. The entire set of models are ingenious and should serve as prototypes to educators who really want to develop an education of meaning. Included is the circular interactive learning environment chart which was submitted to the INAR Task Force.

(INSERT CIRCLE CHART HERE)

The following suggestions may help the process of defining the path of learning you want to create for your students:

1. As a community, examine curriculum that has already been developed, and brainstorm your hopes, wishes and dreams for your children.
2. Talk with tribal Elders and community about traditional learning which they have experienced or about which they have been told. Wa-He-Lute Indian School at Frank's Landing, Washington, developed a seasonal-environmental curriculum based on their ancient values and beliefs, oral traditions, their Elders, the Nisqually River, Mount Rainier, and the flora and fauna (huckleberries, salmonberries, alder, cedar and fishing). Discuss how science, language, mathematics, arts, social studies, music, and physical education can be taught in concert. **Culture as the common denominator creates a high interest motivational vehicle for teaching. Then the interdisciplinary curriculum exemplifies the ancient wisdom that "All things are interrelated."**
3. Discuss common stereotypes and cultural biases to which your children have been exposed. Examine your school's textbooks for stereotypical or untruthful representations. One person summed up the comments of many at the INAR Task Force hearings by noting that "textbook vendors must be firmly persuaded to publish texts that do real justice to the contributions of Native Americans and other minority groups. Paragraphs and sidebars inserted here and there are not an adequate response to this demand." Another Native person at the Juneau hearings said textbooks need to be revised to "reflect a less stereotypical image of Native Americans and to present non-biased accounts of historical events." Become advocates for your students. Serve on textbook commissions and school boards. Keep positive, direct communication with school administrators, staff, community, and students.
4. Define priorities and begin formulating sequential lessons. Start with what is most important. Kent Nerburn of Red Lake Public Schools in Bemidji, Minnesota related the motto of Project Preserve:

"Honor the past, serve the present, and prepare for the future." Honoring the past includes compiling a book of memories and photographs of Elders on the reservation. Serving the present means that they have a strong volunteer program. They also prepare for the future by taking college classes and doing well. This holistic project has characteristics which are crucial to Indian education: (1) students focus on their own culture and learn Native cultural skills. (2) The projects are collaborative rather than individual efforts, but they allow individuals to offer their own talents to the group. (3) The teacher is a facilitator, thus reshaping the teacher-student relationship. (4) Student work is product oriented. (5) Participation in projects is voluntary. (6) Projects have a multi-generational characteristic. (7) Knowledge is derived from experience rather than textbooks. (8) The program includes close support services.

5. The following suggestions are related to curriculum materials and the development of a positive learning environment:
   a. Demonstrate that cultural diversity is a national treasure, not a national burden;
   b. Recruit more Native teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members; Start developing a mind set of empowerment in preschool and grade school;
   c. Assist teacher assistants to acquire certification;
   d. **Require textbooks free of cultural bias and stereotypes; Require that Indian history courses be created and taken by all students in the United States.** Many respondents urged the INAR Task Force to **mandate that more Indian history be incorporated in the school curriculum**. Charles Hines, an elected tribal official in Oklahoma expressed the feelings of many Native parents, students, Elders and educators when he said, **"Don't start American History with the discovery of Columbus."** In examining many textbooks, it is sad but true that the misinformation is still there, despite our attempts to improve the situation. In my son's fourth grade social studies textbook, I reviewed the time-lines of history which precede the study of each geographical region in the United States. In the textbook writer's mind, history began when the visitors got here, and that prevents our young, questioning minds from noticing the extreme injustices that were done/are being done to an entire group of Native people. All children need to see the patterns of history, and decide what course they would have taken/would choose to take today. **Children are extremely capable of knowing what is fair or unfair. We owe them the truth.**
   e. Develop more culturally-relevant curriculum in all content areas;
   f. Encourage culturally-sensitive staff development. In testimony to the INAR Task Force, a large number of people expressed concern for teacher and staff training. I urge each parent and educator to listen to the years of experience and wisdom in Rosemary Ackley-Christensen's proposed ideas on staff development: First of all, she questions **why colleges of education and departments of educational administration in graduate schools would graduate people who do not have the necessary skills to teach the children.** She discusses the methodology of change, accountability and entrenched bureaucracy. In very concise terms, she lists specific assumptions for cultural competencies. She suggests four competencies in staff development. To be judged competent to teach American Indian children, teachers and other staff must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of at least one competency. The remaining competencies must be accumulated within a three year period. The cultural competencies are: (1) Independence, (2) Age-related respect, (3) Connectedness and (4) Indirect communications. These recommendations are fully explained in the text of her testimony. I would recommend the article as required reading for anyone in education.
   g. Mandate quality teacher education;
   h. Provide innovative leadership training for students and adults;

i. Offer training for paraprofessionals and teachers to work together more effectively;
j. Empower students and their parents to make the most of the educational experience, and make learning a life-long activity;
k. Improve academic achievement;
l. Lower drop-out rates;
m. Ensure respect of every student by carefully examining team and mascot names — be certain they are not derogatory toward any group of people, i.e., Southeastern Savages, Tecumseh Savages, Hominy Bucks, Northeastern Redskins...;
n. Enable Natives to serve on review panels which affect the education of their children (textbook commission, state history, core curriculum, staff development.);
o. Encourage communication between Native governments, parents, communities, school districts, and students;
p. Employ eminent persons of the tribe as faculty;
q. Create videos, films, and voice recordings to preserve the knowledge and language if permission is given;
r. Develop whole language curricula built around eminent persons and other community-generated topics;
s. Encourage intergenerational learning as in the past;
t. Revitalize language and culture at the same time;
Welcome cultural diversity — compare and contrast.
u. Dr. Rennard Strickland, a legal historian of Osage and Cherokee heritage, makes two major points in his testimony in Oklahoma City. They are: **(1) The study of Native American culture and history should be required of students of Indian heritage; and (2) The study of Native American culture and history should be required of non-Indian students as well.** He believes, as do many others who testified, that it is important to men and women, boys and girls of Native heritage that they study their cultures to build pride, confidence and understanding. He says, "It is important as an antidote to the poison which has been spilled out for almost five hundred years in traveler's narratives, dime novels, and at Saturday matinees." Dr. Strickland also adds that this question of false image "profoundly impacts upon contemporary American Indian policy and shapes the general cultural view of the Indian as well as the Indian's own self-image. It can be seen from the smallest details of an everyday children's game of cowboys and Indians to the international arena where a movie star President of the United States gives Hollywood rooted answers to Soviet students' questions about Native Americans."

Incorporating Culture and Language: Preserve, Promote, and Protect

The following ideas are ones that will incorporate students' language and culture into the school program. They will not only assist in academic success, but will reinforce cultural identities. Dr. Steven Pratt (Osage) has discussed how to teach language and revitalize culture at the same time. "Language and culture are two sides of the same coin" according to James Banks. (Banks, 1988, p. 261) Osage Elder and language teacher Hazel Lohah Harper says **"if Native language is not preserved, cultural preservation will be impeded. Some Indian languages will never be spoken again; therefore language preservation and instruction are necessary."** Culture can be defined as a set of attributes, such as values, beliefs, behavior patterns and symbols unique to a particular human group. Language establishes the bond between individuals, and between individuals and groups, that makes group life possible. Language gives a group a way to communicate among itself, sharing the same meaning. Language transmits group values, beliefs and attitudes. Language contains a group's ethnicity, culture and history, a cord binding the past to the present. (Banks, 1988, p. 262) These suggestions from New Zealand, where cultural revitalization is alive and well, have been recommended in Jim Cummins' book *Empowering Minority Students*.

- Reflect the various cultural groups in the school district by providing signs in the main office and elsewhere that welcome people in the different languages of the community;

- Encourage students to use their first language around the school;
- Provide opportunities for students from the same ethnic group to communicate with one another in their first language where possible (e.g., in cooperative learning groups on at least some occasions);
- Recruit people who can tutor students in their first language;
- Provide books written in the various languages in both classrooms and the school library;
- Incorporate greetings and information in the various languages in newsletters and other official school communications;
- Provide bilingual and/or multilingual signs;
- Display pictures and objects of the various cultures represented at the school;
- Create units of work that incorporate other languages in addition to the school language;
- Encourage students to write contributions in their first language for school newspapers and magazines;
- Provide opportunities for students to study their first language in elective subjects and/or in extracurricular clubs;
- Encourage parents to help in the classroom, library, playground, and in clubs;
- Invite second language learners to use their first language during assemblies, prize givings, and other official functions;
- Invite people from ethnic minority communities to act as resource people and to speak to students in both formal and informal settings. (New Zealand Department of Education, 1988)

These suggestions to elevate respect for Native language will enhance the self-image of the Native student, as well as preserve, promote, and protect the language. The Assembly of First Nation's *Aboriginal Language Policy Study* contains the powerful quotation: **"If we can speak and understand our language, our Elders can tell us who we are."**

Networking: Share Success

There are many exemplary Native education programs in the United States and Canada. We need to publicize their successful practices, so all students may benefit. They are as varied as the people they represent, and I believe that is part of the key to their successes. Each seems to have been borne out of expressed needs and thoughtful vision of what ought to be for their children. Some programs have been discussed in the previous pages. In the United States today, we have exemplary programs for rural, urban, public, alternative and tribally controlled schools. The descriptions by necessity will be brief:

Hualapai tribal members in Peach Springs, Arizona, have formulated exciting models for cultural-linguistic-environmental studies. Hualapai Bilingual Academic Excellence Program provides a firm foundation for the development of curriculum based on the linguistic and cultural background of a community and its children. The program philosophy and learning theory base are congruent with community beliefs and values. The Hualapai Cultural Environmental Curriculum is a thematic approach. The theme formulates the content of the units and is based on topics with a special relevance to the local Native community. Science, math, and language arts studies relate to the environment and life experiences of the Hualapai reservation. Discovery and experience are integral to the curriculum experiences. (Watahomigie, INAR Task Force Testimony, 1990, Phoenix)

At Isleta Pueblo, a computer program developed by a University of New Mexico professor, Ted Jojola, (an Isleta Native himself) assists Headstart students in learning the language and folkways of their ancient tribe. There is differing opinion on whether to continue this project. The children are learning, but so too, are non-Isletans. Traditionalists, understandably are concerned (from the last 500 years of siege) by those who would destroy the culture in one way or another. The Zuni Literacy Project, a spinoff from Isleta's language and culture computer program, has made tremendous progress. They have been compiling a Zuni/English dictionary and creating a series of film strip-like "storybooks" which use sound and static visual images to tell stories in the Zuni language. Their goal is "to promote literacy in Zuni so the tribe retains its language and traditions in a rapidly changing world. Acoma and San Juan tribes of New Mexico have also evolved Macintosh computer programs to help teach the Native language.

In testimony to the INAR Task Force in St. Paul, MN, Verna Graves, Director of Education, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, stated **the tribal government of the Red Lake Band is the only tribe in the western hemisphere which has prepared a comprehensive code**

for education. The band has developed seven educational goals and four general education objectives. The tribal council has declared the Chippewa language the official language of Red Lake. The education goals encompass a broad knowledge of Chippewa culture, and are intended to be integrated into all phases of the curricula. The Red Lake Tribal Education Goals are as follows:

1. The Chippewa culture will be integrated as a functional part of all the curricula. Culture includes our language, values, ethics, the arts, law, history, philosophy, psychology, health, medicine, and social structures.
2. Parents and family will be involved in their children's educational development.
3. All schools will strive to meet the educational needs of individual students. Students will achieve to the maximum of their potential. More students will pursue post-secondary education and become contributing citizens of our Nation.
4. Social problems will be minimized.
5. The unemployment rate will diminish and employees will be more successful and productive in their jobs.
6. The Red Lake Band will attain increased human resource expertise and the leadership necessary for further growth and development.
7. Tribal unity and a stronger tribal government will be realized through the continued exercise of sovereignty in education. Excellence in education will be continually defined and redefined as we achieve our educational goals and objectives.

The general education objectives are as follows:

1. To provide learning experiences and educational opportunities which enable Red Lake children to function competently when encountering changing circumstances.
2. To develop, monitor and upgrade educational experiences which will lead to the progressive enrichment of individual, familial, and tribal life.
3. To reinforce positive experiences in the home which will enable parents to become more resourceful and effective in facilitating the educational development of their children.
4. To provide successful experiences for Red Lake children in the school environment that will stimulate a positive attitude toward school and education.

Ms. Graves quoted Public Law 100-297 (Section 5106) which guaranteed that the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Interior "...shall provide for comprehensive multicultural and multilingual education programs including the production and use of instructional materials, culturally appropriate methodologies and teaching and learning strategies that will reinforce, preserve and maintain Indian and Alaska Native languages, cultures and histories." Though these policies were written for Indian Nations who are federally recognized (which policies recently became law), it was anticipated that these policies, written by Indian people, would be adopted by other school systems which enrolled American Indian students.

She eloquently stated a common theme when she testified: "We believe it is necessary and inherently proper for each tribe to develop systems of education. For years we have danced to the tune of others as education plans were written for us; we will now go forward with our own plans to serve our own people governed and prescribed from within to serve the individual member and our tribe as a whole." The Language Policy of the Education Code is an excellent example of tribal autonomy in education. The declaration begins: **"The Chippewa language is a gift from the Creator to our people and, therefore, shall be treated with respect."** There are sections on:

1. reciprocity of language use
2. protection of language use authority
3. general application
4. status of the Chippewa language
5. parent involvement
6. eminent persons/Elders
7. Chippewa language as an integral part of all school curricula
8. orthography
9. teacher, administrator, and guidance counselor competencies for language instruction (preservice and inservice)
10. teachers and teacher-aides: certification for language instruction
11. establishment of the Red Lake Language and Culture Commission
12. composition of the Red Lake Language and Culture Commission

13. role and function of the Red Lake Language and Culture Commission
14. research and external studies that require tribal approval
15. funding for language policy implementation

The Indian Reading Series is an example of curriculum created by Indian authors, authenticated by the participating tribes and field-tested in over 93 classrooms. The student books show the cultural diversity of Indian America, and are designed to improve reading comprehension, classroom participation and written and oral language skills. The teacher manuals relate cultural background information, program objectives and rationale, and teaching activities organized around Native culture utilizing the language experience approach to learning. **The activities are designed to help students learn how to think, rather than what to think.**

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction believes public school curricula must reflect instruction in the history and culture of American Indian and Alaska Native and other ethnic societies. The Department of Public Instruction offers three teacher training programs as models for other states, as well as a four-part Native curriculum built around the North Dakota Centennial celebration. These efforts were put forth because a survey showed that 99 percent of the teachers in North Dakota indicated they do not have books about Native Americans in their classrooms, 75 percent do not frequently plan activities reflective of cultural diversity, and 91 percent do not plan activities reflecting Native culture. (Cheryl Kulas, INAR Task Force Testimony 1990, St. Paul)

A school in Pawnee, Oklahoma, has found a unique solution to a political, social and legal dilemma. Helen Norris's, Title V-C Indian students visited Pawnee homelands in Republic, Nebraska, and toured the original earth lodges of their ancestors. In 1985, 42 students and their parents traveled to Chicago to the Field Museum to visit the largest display of Pawnee artifacts in the United States. In 1988, students wrote letters to the Nebraska Historical Society, asking the Society to release 378 skeletal remains of their ancestors and their burial goods that had been "dug up." Their letters are a part of a congressional hearing report and were instrumental in the reburial of 146 Pawnee, Arikara and Wichita ancestors who had been put on public display in Salina, Kansas. The students also raised money for a Pendleton blanket to be placed on one of the bodies for burial. This labor of love encompassed cultural and linguistic tradition, writing, speaking, listening, researching, and communicating with Elders, staff, attorneys, legislators, and one another. (Norris, INAR Task Force Testimony, Oklahoma City, 1990)

A successful venture between the University of the State of New York and the New York State Education Department has produced a publication, *Ogwehowe:ka? Native Languages for Communication, New York State Syllabus.* This is a framework for the development of local curricula which will integrate principles of second language acquisition with New York State program requirements and the Board of Regents goals for elementary and secondary education. The Syllabus places emphasis on communicative proficiency and the understanding and appreciation of other cultures.

The Southern Utes have a language program for retention, preservation and maintenance. The activities that accompany the language lessons are all culturally relevant, and designed for easy use by teachers. Elders and educators collaborated on this project which includes major concepts and key historical information in a context that will interest children.

The Makah have a Language Retention, Preservation and Maintenance Program. Included are an illustrated Makah Alphabet Book, First Lessons in Makah, A Counting Workbook, oral tradition coloring books, and Makah Reservation Place Names. All these were done through the efforts of many Makah Elders.

The REACH Center (*R*especting *E*thnic *a*nd *C*ultural *H*eritage), based in Arlington, Washington is providing much-needed educational services to schools, social service agencies and businesses throughout the United States. The Center specializes in cultural awareness training and the production of educational materials which build a positive understanding of cultural diversity.

UNITY (United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc.) an Oklahoma based national organization is involved in activities which enable Native youth to meet together, define problems, identify solutions and develop strategies to address their concerns. The goals and strategies are built around

- spirituality
- unity
- environment
- heritage
- sovereignty
- family
- individual

- education
- health
- economy
- sobriety
- service

The Cheyenne Circle Keepers are children in four communities in western Oklahoma who have pledged to keep their bodies, minds, and spirits strong — in holding with ancient tradition. They have special interactions with their Native Elders, learning the history and traditions that keep a people strong. Their gourd dance clan is a powerful presence, showing what love for children and Elders can produce. The values of using our cultural roots is echoed by one of the leading educators of our time, Ernest Boyer, who said,

> But if we have learned anything from our relationship with the American Indian, it is that people cannot be torn from their cultural roots without harm. To the extent that we fail to assist Native Americans, *through their own institutions*, to reclaim their past and secure their future, we are compounding the costly errors of the past.

Summary of Recommendations

- Begin a program of curriculum revision with the assistance of eminent persons, Elders, tribal leaders, historians, educators, parents, and students.
- Encourage tribal education codes to ensure autonomy and leadership in education. Encourage partnerships for change. Native governments need to interface with local education agencies, state education agencies and federal programs that affect Native students.
- Require boards of education to develop policies and plans of action to ensure that local outcomes are consistent with national and state goals.
- Initiate a major textbook review commission. Ensure that all tribes in state and nation are represented. Involve tribal Elders, historians, authors, educators, parents and students.
- Encourage publishers to produce textbooks, software, and other materials which reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Assist school districts in selecting materials that are authentic, non-stereotypical, tribal specific and free of cultural bias.
- Ensure that no school district or any team have a mascot or team name which is derogatory to any ethnic group.
- Require that teacher education programs in the state prepare teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations. Coordinate efforts with NCATE and AACTE.
- Assist school districts and institutions of higher learning to recruit and retain more diverse faculty and staff.
- Offer Native language instruction from preschool through higher education and adult education. Work to get quality Native language instructors through alternative certification.
- Mandate that Native history be taught at all levels. Assist educators in teaching about Native people in core curriculum for all children throughout the year. Prohibit stereotypical representations of Thanksgiving and Indian-Day or Week superficial (often untrue) activities.
- Encourage Elders and other eminent persons to serve as faculty with respectable pay scale.
- Encourage intergenerational learning experiences at every opportunity. Set up mentoring with eminent persons.
- Create an educational experience of meaning through traditional wisdom.
- Enable all students to serve Elders and younger children, their parents and communities.
- Empower students to become true stewards of Mother Earth, to learn about ecology, conservation and the interrelationship of all things.

In conclusion, it is imperative that educators and parents recognize the value of a child's language and culture. Educators must learn how to respectfully incorporate learning within a Native context, and Native context within the learning structure. American Indian and Alaska Native children are most often forced to grow up experiencing at least two very different, and usually conflicting views of the world in which they live. Educators must come to understand the difficult, and often traumatic cultural and linguistic conflicts that Native students undergo as they attend schools of the dominant society. Because of the

incongruity of the conflicting cultures, insecurity, ambiguity, and alienation are common results of the failure to appropriately and adequately address a child's needs as he/she comes into the school. Alienation leads to failure, anger, hopelessness, confusion, and in many cases directly to dropping out of school altogether.

What is needed is a curriculum of meaning which is relevant to the present lives and future goals of students, and importantly, a curriculum which is reflective of their ancient and dynamic contemporary cultures and their diverse languages. The educational experiences of students will lead to empowerment or disablement, depending on the attitudes of the educators, parents, and communities. Much also hinges on the institutional characteristics of the school which include:

1. how culture and linguistics are incorporated
2. how the community is empowered and enabled to participate in a collaborative way to influence the education of their children
3. how the pedagogy genuinely incorporates student's backgrounds and experiences into the school program.

I believe, in order to adequately meet the educational needs of Native students, it is essential that we now begin by establishing a National Native Curriculum Project, funded by the United States Department of Education, as entitlement based on treaty rights. The need is clear, not only in Native communities for Native Students, but to benefit all students by creating more accurate learning experiences related to the American Indian and Alaska Native.

This National Native Curriculum Project should have a central office, director and staff of Native curriculum developers, with years of experience in Native communities and education. Regional offices should also be established in each of the identified culture areas to develop locally researched Native curriculum which accurately reflects the life-ways of the people. The results will necessarily be tribal-specific, non-stereotypical, authentic, and free of cultural bias. All regional centers will feed into the national center (and vice-versa) and the result will be a curriculum of empowerment for students, enhanced by the generous contributions of all Native groups for all Native children. This curriculum (and accompanying resource materials) will be placed in every school site in the United States, as an accurate resource to bring children honor, and to ensure that even the children "seven generations to come" may benefit from this decisive action.

It is in this way, we change the years of misinformation to a future beyond the "Thanksgiving and Indians" syndrome. Not only will contributions of Native peoples be discussed, along with heroes and holidays, but a higher level of learning will result. The structure of the curriculum itself will be transformed to enable students to view concepts, issues, events, and themes from the unique and diverse perspectives of Native groups. Then, and only then, will students gain the level of critical thinking to enable them to make thoughtful decisions on issues and be proactive.

As we move together, toward this end, I ask that we remember the difference of merely seeing with our eyes and the "seeing" that encompasses much more. In the *Lakota Times* it is explained this way:

> ...two Ojibwe words rank ways of knowing in a different order from the ranking scholars assume. *Moozhitaming*, says an Ojibwe scholar, refers to "feeling what you do not see" — the knowledge and insight a person might gain by careful attention to dreaming, for example. Ojibwe tradition values *moozhitaming* more highly than *ganawaabandaming* — "seeing without feeling." But non-Indian schools rank these kinds of knowledge the other way around. More likely they dismiss *moozhitaming* as no knowledge at all.

In the book, *The Little Prince*, Antoine de Saint — Exupery says it this way: **"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; What is essential is invisible to the eye."**

Helen Chalakee Burgess wrote a poem which expresses the essence of how culture and language are woven throughout our beings:

Este Mvskoke Forever (Muscogee People Forever)

Basketmaker, your clever fingers lace
the honeysuckle with the secrets and strengths
of our people. Your baskets hold the yesterdays
and the tomorrows of our nation.

I watched as the old woman formed
a circular base — a never ending circle
crisscrossed with outside support
...I could see our people overcoming intrusion. We intertwined with the outside
world and became stronger.
Basketmaker reached for another piece of
vine —
her work uninterrupted
...one by one, our elders die. At those very

moments new life is born to replenish and continue the circle.

Silently, I watch as a form emerges from the stringy, root-like vines
...and I remember the old ones saying
in the beginning our people climbed out
of the earth like ants — we are of the earth.

Swiftly, Basketmaker prepares more vines — treating them in the rainwater for suppleness so she can finish her work
...the resiliency of our people has
caused us to go forward and restructure.

Finishing, the old woman lifted her basket and motioned me to follow her into the woods. She knows exactly where to go. Stopping here and there — placing a leaf, a sprig, a whole plant, inside her woven continuum. She stoops to dig a root, then lingers beside an ageless cedar — carefully tearing a tiny branch to add to her collection
...the medicines of our people are now
self-contained within the circle of endurance.

Slowly, she turned to me
with the faintest of smiles upon her face,
knowing she had opened my mind to the
secrets of este mvskoke, forever.
—Helen Chalakee

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